

Canadian Show Jumping team ties for third in Florida Nations' Cup

The Canadian Show Jumping Team, comprised of Caledon resident Yann Candele, Tiffany Foster, Eric Lamaze and Ian Millar, tied for third place in the \$200,000 Furusiyya Nations' Cup held at HITS Post Time Farm Friday at CSIO4* Ocala, Florida.

Six countries contested the first-ever Furusiyya Nations' Cup ? Canada, Colombia, Ireland, Mexico, United States and Venezuela.

Following the first of two rounds of competition over the track set by German course designer Martin Otto, Canada was tied for the lead with a perfect score of zero. Ireland and Colombia were also sitting on fault-free scores, trailed closely by the United States and Venezuela, both counting four faults. With a first-round score of 12 faults, Mexico lay in sixth position.

However, things changed for Canada in the second round of competition. As the lead-off rider, Candele, 43, was unable to repeat his first-round performance, incurring four faults at the open water with Showgirl, a 15-year-old chestnut selle francais mare owned by The Watermark Group.

Foster, marking her 20th appearance riding for the Canadian Show Jumping Team, had incurred four faults in the opening round at the 'b' element of the triple combination riding Verdi III for Artisan Farms LLC. The 30-year-old Vancouver native was unable to improve on her score in the second round, posting a 12-fault effort that would prove to be the drop score.

Like Candele, 10-time Olympian Millar, 68, of Perth, also picked up an uncharacteristic four faults at the open water riding Dixson, a 12-year-old bay Belgian Warmblood gelding owned by Susan Grange and her daughter, Ariel.

As the anchor rider, 2008 Olympic gold medalist Lamaze of Schomberg knocked the plank off the 'b' element of the triple combination, adding another four faults to Canada's bottom line riding Zigali P S, an 11-year-old dark bay Dutch Warmblood gelding owned by Artisan Farms LLC. With a total of 12 faults added to their perfect score from the first round, Canada tied for third with Colombia in the final standings.

Ireland claimed victory with a final score of four faults, helped by double clear performances from Kevin Babington riding Shorapur and Conor Swail on the Canadian-owned Grafton. Georgina Bloomberg and Beezie Madden were also double clear to lead the U.S. to a second-place finish with a final total of eight faults. Canada and Colombia both posted a final score of 12 faults to tie for third while Venezuela was fifth with 16 faults and Mexico placed sixth with 28 faults.

'Sometimes it's just not your day,' said Lamaze, 46. 'We had a great first round, but the second round just didn't go our way. Yann had a mishap at the water, Ian's horse had a toe in the water, which he wouldn't normally do, the course didn't suit Tiffany's horse, and I barely touched the plank. It wasn't a disaster, but sometimes you need luck on your side.'

'Our horses all jumped well, but the second round just didn't fall into place,' Lamaze continued. 'It wasn't meant to be our day.'

'It wasn't that bad, it just wasn't that great,' Canadian Team chef d'equipe Mark Laskin concurred. 'Our guys came through in the first round, and we were right in the hunt at the half-way point. In the second round, we had three fours, which is not bad, but when you add them all up, it is 12 faults.'

'At least we earned second-place Furusiyya points, and we move on to the next qualifier,' continued Laskin. 'For me, our goal is getting to Barcelona.'

For Canada, Mexico and the United States, the Nations' Cup in Ocala acted as the first of three qualifying events in the North and Central America and Caribbean League. The top two teams in the League earn an invitation to the Furusiyya Nations' Cup Final in Barcelona, Spain, from Sept. 24 to 27. In 2014, Canada finished second in the final in Barcelona.